



To: Members of the House Education Committee

From: Allie Bush, Public Policy Coordinator

Subject: Support House Bill 4265 (Price)

Date: April 30, 2015

On behalf of the Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce and our 2,600 members, I ask for your support of House Bill 4265 which would allow for non-contiguous community college districts.

Our members, both small and large, are dedicated to policies that develop a strong talent system through rigorous learning opportunities with employer engagement to ensure students are prepared to succeed in the workforce. Michigan's community colleges are an essential partner in this mission of developing skilled talent that can compete in the marketplace.

Under Michigan's current statute, some communities are being held hostage from taking part in a community college district because neighboring communities chose not to join the district. Communities receive many benefits when they elect to join a community college district, including lower tuition rates, as well as, increased training opportunities for residents and businesses.

Last year, 83 percent of our members reported business growth, however 56 percent continue to report difficulty finding qualified talent. As Michigan's economy continues to improve, we must look to adopt policies that support rigorous education and training opportunities, as well as the elimination of burdensome, outdated policies that do not serve us well in the 21st century.

Allowing non-contiguous districts encourages further collaboration within regions, and increases education and training opportunities for the individuals and businesses within the community; thereby increasing the economic freedom of our residents and Michigan's businesses ability to compete.

We believe this legislation will help Michigan develop a stronger talent system. **Please vote in favor of modernizing our community college districts and furthering the training opportunities of Michigan's citizens.**